

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 09273 171812Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 IO-10 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 (ISO) W

----- 075439

R 171753Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2059

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SP, UK

SUBJECT: LONDON TIMES ARTICLE ON SPANISH AMBASSADOR
FRAGA

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT OF LONDON
TIMES IN JUNE 17 ARTICLE, SPANISH AMBASSADOR IN LONDON
FRAGA EXPECTS TO RETURN TO MADRID IN LATE SUMMER. FRAGA,
DESCRIBED AS STRONG CONTENDER FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP,
INTENDS TO LEAVE LONDON BECAUSE OF "ACCELERATING SENSE
OF CHANGE" IN SPAIN. END SUMMARY

1. DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT OF LONDON TIMES (DAVID
SPANIER) PUBLISHED ARTICLE JUNE 17, OBVIOUSLY ON BASIS OF
INTERVIEW, WHICH REPORTS INTENTION OF SPANISH AMBASSADOR
MANUEL FRAGA IRIBARNE TO RETURN TO SPAIN IN LATE SUMMER
BECAUSE OF "AN ACCELERATING SENSE OF CHANGE" IN SPAIN.

2. SPANIER REPORTS THAT FRAGA IS ONE OF STRONGEST CON-
TENDERS FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN NEW ERA SPAIN IS
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PAGE 02 LONDON 09273 171812Z

CLEARLY EXPECTING. SPANIER STRESSES PROPOSALS FRAGA SUB-

MITTED FOR POLITICAL REFORMS EARLIER THIS YEAR WHICH WERE BASED ON UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE AND FREEDOM FOR TRADE UNIONS UNDER JUAN CARLOS MONARCHY. SINCE THE SPANISH "ESTABLISHMENT" FELT HIS PROPOSALS WERE TOO RADICAL, THEY WERE SHELVED FOR A TIME. FRAGA COMMENTED, HOWEVER, "THERE IS NO TIME LEFT FOR EVOLUTION. THE HOUR OF REFORM IS HERE AND NOW."

3. SPANIER POINTS OUT THAT FRAGA HAS CERTAIN ADVANTAGES IN NEW LEADERSHIP COMPETITION. HIS SIMPLE ORIGINS GIVE HIM UNDERSTANDING OF PEOPLE AND A COMMON TOUCH. HIS ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS, WHICH SPANIER OUTLINES, GIVE HIM STANDING AMONG INTELLECTUALS. SPANIER NOTES THAT FRAGA IS SOMETIMES ACCUSED OF ARROGANCE AND IMPATIENCE AND UNDOUBTEDLY HAS ENEMIES. HOWEVER, FRAGA IS READY, ACCORDING TO THE CORRESPONDENT, FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE POLITICAL CHANGES UPCOMING IN SPAIN.

RICHARDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMBASSADORS, POLITICAL LEADERS, PRESS RELEASES, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL RECALL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON09273
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750211-0654
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750643/aaaabnby.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 APR 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <22 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LONDON TIMES ARTICLE ON SPANISH AMBASSADOR FRAGA
TAGS: PFOR, SP, UK, (FRAGA IRIBARNE, MANUEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006